headquarters of the Administration. The manufacture of country spirit gives employment to a considerable number of persons, most of whom are females. At a recent census of the country stills in the district, undertaken by the district officials, the number of stills has been found to be 1,530. There must be at least one person employed at each still, so that the number of distillers is probably not less than 2,000, possibly more. The spirit is distilled both for home consumption and for purposes of sale, in some villages almost entirely for sale. In the Jaintia Hills stock-breeding and dealing in cattle provides occupation for 1,295 people, according to the last census. The cattle are reared in the Jaintia Hills and are driven down to the plains when they reach the age of maturity, where they find a ready market amongst the Sylhetis. Cattle are also driven into Shillong for sale from the Jaintia Hills. Another place for rearing cattle is the Siemship of Nongkhlaw, where there is good pasturage in the neighbourhood of Mairang. These cattle are either sold in Shillong or find their way to the Kamrup district by the old Nongkhlaw road. Cattle-breeding is an industry which is capable of expansion in these hills. There are a few carpenters to be found in Shillong and its neighbourhood. The Khasis are said by Col. Waddell to be unacquainted with the art of weaving; but the fact that a considerable weaving industry exists amongst the Khyrwang villages of the Syntengs, and at Mynso and Suhtnga, has been overlooked by him. The Khyrwangs weave a special pattern of cotton and silk cloth, striped red and white. In Mynso and Suhtnga similar cloths are woven, also the sleeveless coat. In former days this industry is said to have been considerable, but it has been displaced to a large extent of late years by Manchester piece goods. The number of weavers returned at the last census in the district was 533. The Khasis and Mikirs of the low country, or Bhois as they are called, weave cotton cloths which they dye with the leaves of a plant called *u noli*. This is perhaps the wild indigo, or *ram*, of the Shan settlers in the Assam Valley. The weavers are almost always females. An important means of subsistence is road and building work; a considerable number of coolies, both male and female, are employed under Government, practically throughout the year, in

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COTTON CLOTHS.

283 In the Jaintia Hills at Mynso cotton is spun into thread, and
288 weaving is carried on there, but on a limited scale. The Mynso people weave the small strips of cloth worn by the men to serve the purpose of the Assamese *lengti* or Hindi *languti*. In Suhtnga the people import cotton thread from Mynso and weave the (*ingki*) or sleeveless coat, peculiar to the district; these coats are dyed red and blue. The dark blue or black dye
824 is obtained from the leaf of a plant called *u sybu*, which
386 Mr. Rita has classified as *strobilanthus hoeditolius*, which
288 grows in the gardens round the homesteads. The leaves are dried, then reduced to powder, mixed with hot water, and the skeins of thread are steeped in the liquid. The colour is permanent. The red dye is obtained from the mixture of the dry bark of two shrubs, *ka lapyndong* (*symplocos racemosa*, Roxb.), and *ka 'larnong* (*morinda-tinctoria*, Roxb.), the latter being the same as the Assamese (আচুকাটে) *áchukáth*. The bark is dried, then pounded, and the two sorts are mixed together and made into a paste with hot water. The skeins are steeped in this mixture for twenty-four hours, then taken out and divided, and again steeped for another twenty-four hours. The Lalungs and Bhois and Lynngams all weave cotton cloths, which are generally dyed blue, sometimes striped blue and red. The Wárs weave cotton cloths which are dyed red and yellow, the cloths being woven in checks. Mr. Darrah remarks that the cotton grown in the Jaintia Hills is said to be the best cotton produced in the province. Its thread can be more closely woven than that of other kinds. This statement, however, is not borne out by Mr. Allen writing in 1858, who says that the cotton is of inferior quality, the staple being short and woolly. The cotton cloths woven by the Bhois are called *spua*.

POTTERY.

[162] The Census Report of 1901 gave the number of persons who
323 are supported by the manufacture of pottery at 54 only. Pottery is manufactured at one place only in the Jaintia Hills,

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credited, owing, no doubt, to the advance of Christianity and education.

CEREMONIES AND CUSTOMS ATTENDING BIRTH AND NAMING OF CHILDREN.

The Khasi birth ceremonies and customs are as follows:—When a child is born the umbilical cord is cut by a sharp splinter of bamboo; no knife can be used on this occasion. The Mundas of Chota Nagpur similarly taboo a metal instrument for this purpose. The child is then bathed in hot water from a red earthen pot. The placenta is carefully preserved in an earthen vessel in the house till after the naming ceremony has taken place. When the umbilical cord, after being tied, falls off, a puja is performed with eggs to certain water deities (*ka blei sam-um* and *ka niangriang*),* also to a forest spirit (*u'suid bri* or *u'suid khláw*). The naming ceremony of the child is performed the next morning after the birth. Certain females are invited to come and pound rice in a mortar into flour. The flour when ready is placed on a bamboo winnower (*u prah*). Fermented rice is mixed with water and is placed in a gourd. Some powdered turmeric is also provided, and is kept ready in a plantain leaf, also five pieces of *'kha piah*, or dried fish. The earthen pot containing the placenta is then placed in the *nongpei*, or centre room of the house. If the child is a male, they place near him a bow and three arrows (the implements of a Khasi warrior); if a female, a *da* and *u star*, or cane head-strap for carrying burdens. An elderly man, who knows how to perform the naming puja, which is called by the Khasis "*kaba jer khun*," places a plantain-leaf on the floor and sprinkles some water on it. He takes the gourd in his hand and calls a god to witness. The people assembled then mention a number of names for the child, and ask the man who is performing the puja to repeat them. This he does, and at the same time pours a little liquor from the gourd on to the ground. As he goes on pouring, the liquor by degrees becomes exhausted, and finally only a few drops remain. The name at the repeat-

* A spirit which is supposed to have the power of causing a disease of the navel of a child.

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ing of which the last drop of liquor remains adhering to the spout of the gourd is the name selected for the child. Then the puja performer invokes the god to grant good luck to the child. The father takes the pot containing the placenta, after having previously placed rice flour and fermented rice therein, and waves it three times over the child, and then walks out with it through the main entrance of the house and hangs up the pot to a tree outside the village. When he returns from this duty, before he re-enters the house, another throws water over the father's feet. The father, being thus cleansed, enters, and holds the rice flour to his mouth three times. Two people then, holding the dried fish by their two ends, break them in two. The powdered turmeric mixed with rice flour and water is applied to the right foot of the father, the mother and the child receiving the same treatment. The friends and relations are then anointed, the turmeric being applied, however, to their left feet. The bow, arrows, *da*, and *u star* are carefully placed inside the inner surface of the thatch on the roof, and the ceremony is over. Rice flour is then distributed to all who are present, and the male adults are given liquor to drink. After two or three months the ears of the child are bored and ear-rings are inserted. These ear-rings are called *ki shashkor iawbei* (i.e. the ear-rings of the great-grandmother). Mr. Jenkins mentions that the naming ceremony amongst the Syntengs is performed by the "eldest aunt," presumably on the mother's side. A basket of eggs is placed in the centre of the room, and before the ceremony begins one egg has to be broken. Then the aunt of the child takes two sticks, and, raising them to her shoulder, lets them fall to the ground. Before they fall she shouts, "What name do you give the child?" The name is mentioned, and if, on falling upon the ground, one stick crosses the other, it is a proof that the name has won the approval of the spirit. If the sticks do not fall in this position, another egg is broken and another name is chosen, and the sticks are dropped as before until they fall in the required position, when it is understood by the performers that the name is a good one. Mr. Jenkins was informed by a young man "who had renounced heathenism" that some of the more cunning women cross the sticks before lifting them, and that

children, but Christian influence has eradicated or driven underground the consumption by women and children. **Industrial arts.** The only industrial arts traditionally practiced in all households were a rudimentary carpentry and a simple utilitarian basketry. Other arts were few, and were practiced as village specialties: the washing and smelting of iron ore and the forging of hoes, daos, knives, swords, and cooking pots (upland Khasis); the spinning of cotton thread (Mynso village, Jaintia); the dyeing of cotton thread and the weaving of cloth (Jaintias, Bhois, Lyngngams, Wars); the spinning and weaving of Eri silk (Khyrwang and Nongtung villages, Bhoi and Jaintia); and the hand manufacture, without wheel, of painted earthenware pots (Larnai village, Jaintia). Ironworking and the production of cotton goods have nearly died out through the competition of machine-made goods. Carpentry has greatly improved. An innovation of major importance is the sewing and tailoring, on sewing machines, of ready-made garments for both sexes. [Cf. Darrah 1896; C., W. 1832.] **Trade.** Khasi villages normally contain a number of household shops operated by women. Every Khasi also lives within walking distance of several village markets that are held on successive days of the eight-day week. The limits of market intercourse for the members of any particular village can be roughly distinguished by their naming the days of their week, which are called after the active markets. The exception is the huge market at Shillong, much of which is active daily, and which serves as a magnet for Khasis from all over the hills. The traditional barter has given way to currency in all markets. The small ones contain at least some local farm produce, plus other essentials like betel nut, and the food and tea stalls which serve as centers of social intercourse. The big markets contain not only regional produce and manufactures but also products from distant parts of the hills, brought for sale by traveling middlemen. There is also substantial trade, from the hills to the valleys, in potatoes, pears, hides, lac, cotton, caoutchouc, the wood of the sal tree, Eri silk thread, limestone, coal, ivory, bay leaf, betel nut, pan leaves, bananas, sugar cane, oranges, til, turmeric, and chilies. From the plains to the hills, there is trade in dried fish, paddy rice, salt, cooking oil, kerosene, matches, tea, sugar, wheat flour, machine-made cloth, shoes, metal pots, crockery, porcelain objects, coral beads, silver, and gold. Markets are important not only as economic institutions but also as centers for recreation (including archery competitions), courtship, reaffirmation of kinship ties with distant relatives, and the dissemination of information of all kinds. [Cf. Stegmiller 1924a.] **Division of labor.** Men do the heavy work, such as clearing and burning the swidden fields, caring for cattle and goats and driving them to market, butchering and selling large cuts of beef and pork, carpentry and mining, and driving and laboring on motor vehicles. They also tailor men's

276 177 335 285 184 [283] [386] [286] [323] 177 178 [326] [286] [337] [294] 443 444 [805] [437] [178] [443] [438] [441] [526] [583] [602] [203] 462 [241] [231] [442] [335] [316] [493] 000